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THE RUBÁIYÁT OF A BACHELOR

HELEN·ROWLAND

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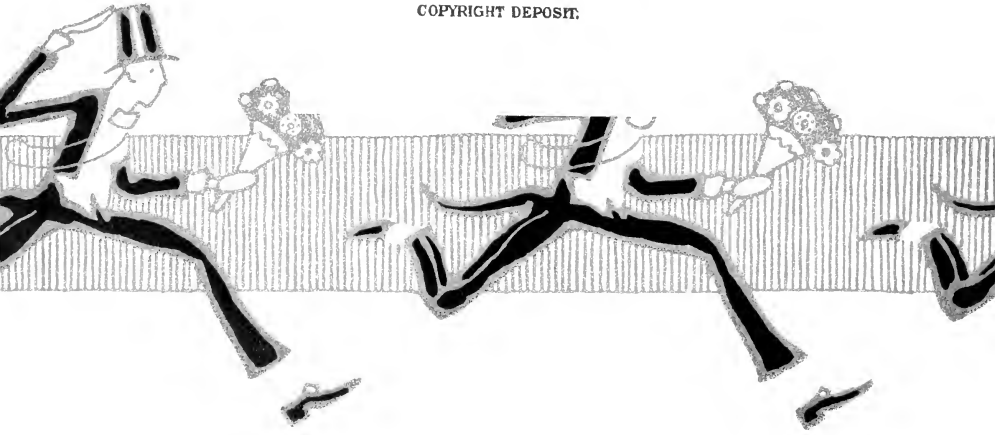

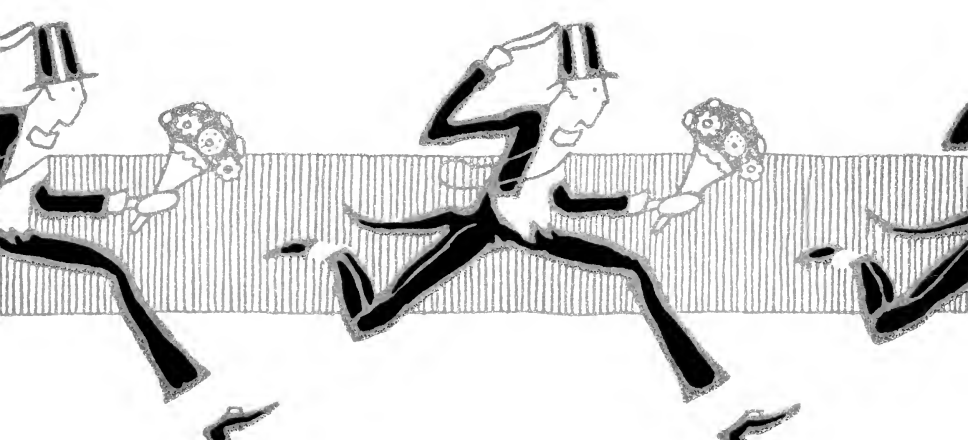

THE RUBÁIYÁT OF A BACHELOR

PROMISED TO PAY A WOMAN'S BILLS FOR LIFE.

THE RUBÁIYÁT OF A BACHELOR

BY HELEN ROWLAND

DECORATIONS BY HAROLD SPEAKMAN

DODGE PUBLISHING COMPANY

NEW YORK

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FEB 12 1916
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TO

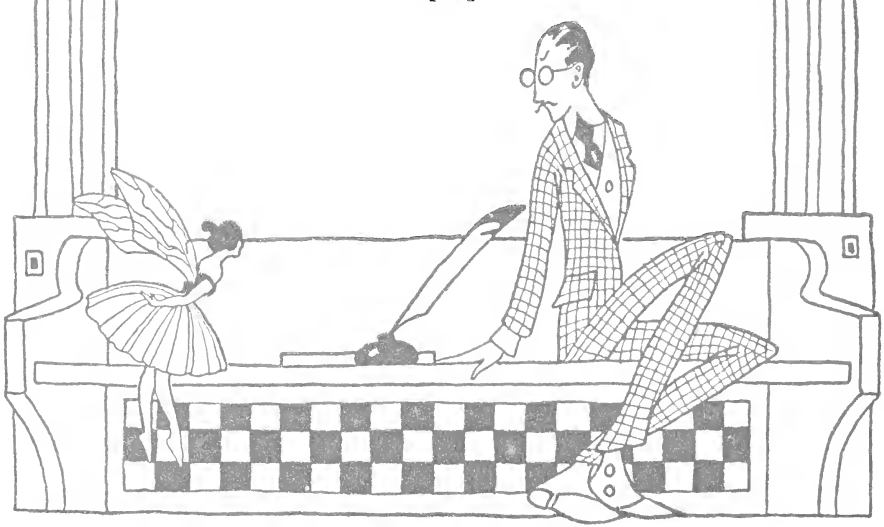
MY HUSBAND

WILLIAM HILL-BRERETON

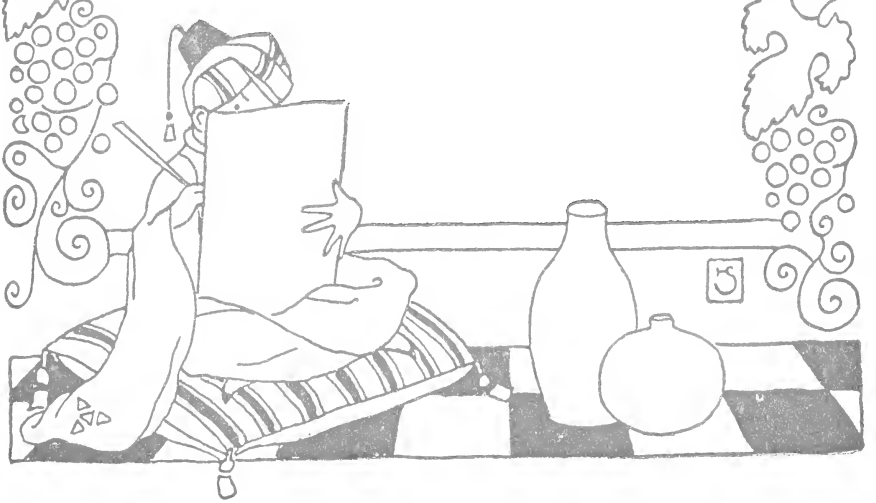
THIS LITTLE BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

WAKE! For the Spring has scattered into flight
The Vows of Lent, and bids the heart be light.
Bring on the Roast, and take the Fish away!
The Season calls—and Woman's eyes are bright!

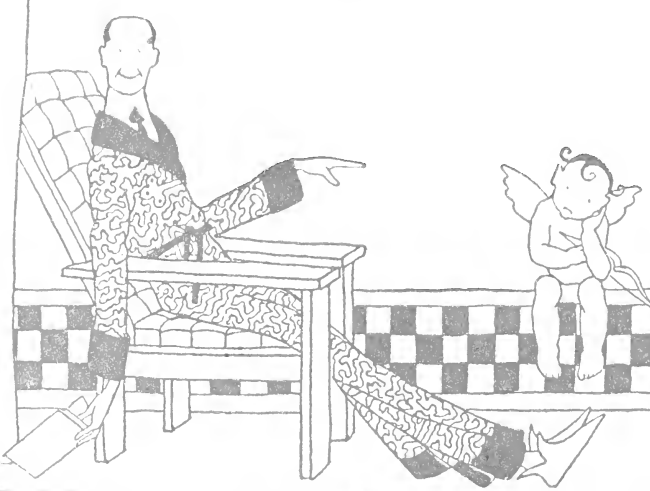
BEFORE the phantom of Pale
Winter died,
Methought the Voice of Spring
within me cried,
"When Hymen's rose-decked
altars glow within,
Why nods the laggard *Bachelor*
outside?"

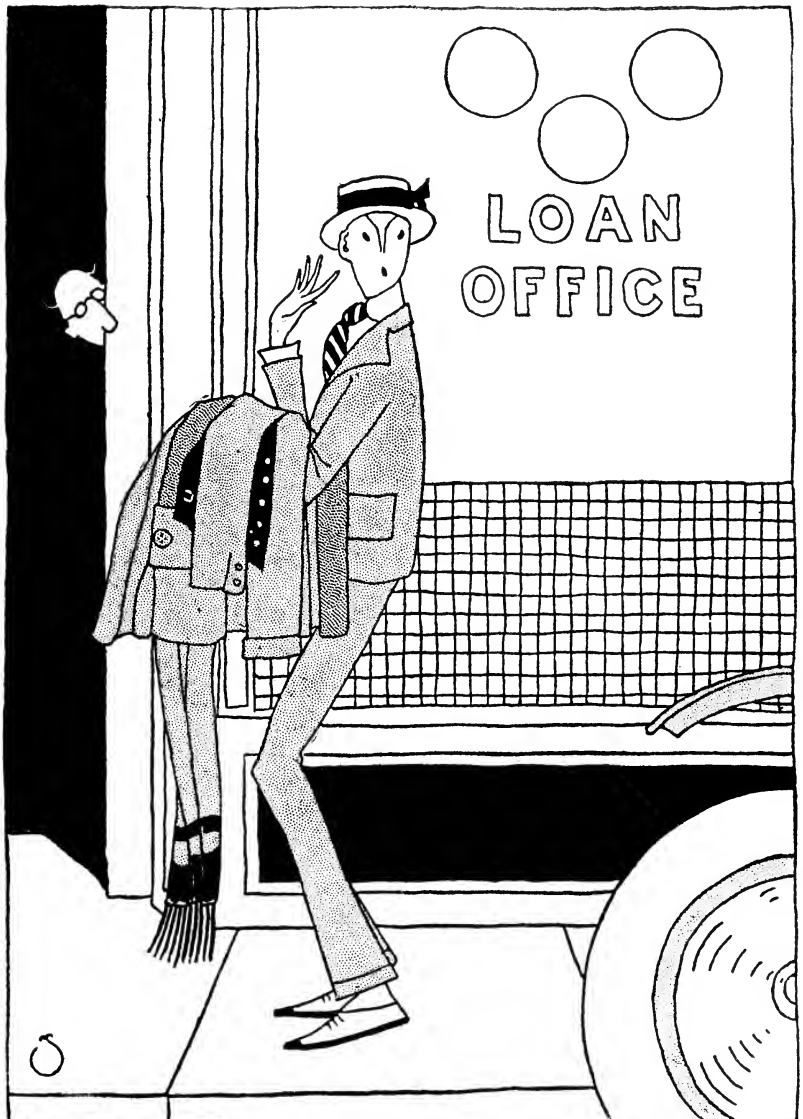


AND, at the Signal, I who stood
before
In idle musing, shouted, "Say no
more!
You know how little while
we have to Love—
And Love's light Hand is knock-
ing at the door!"



NOW, the New Moon reviving
old desires,
The gallant Youth to Sentiment
aspires;
And ere he saunters forth on
conquest bent,
Himself, like unto Solomon,
attires.

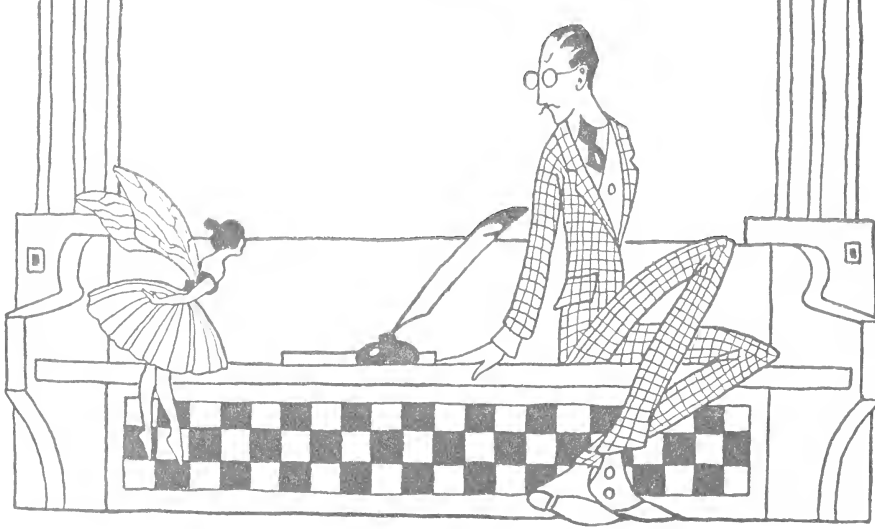




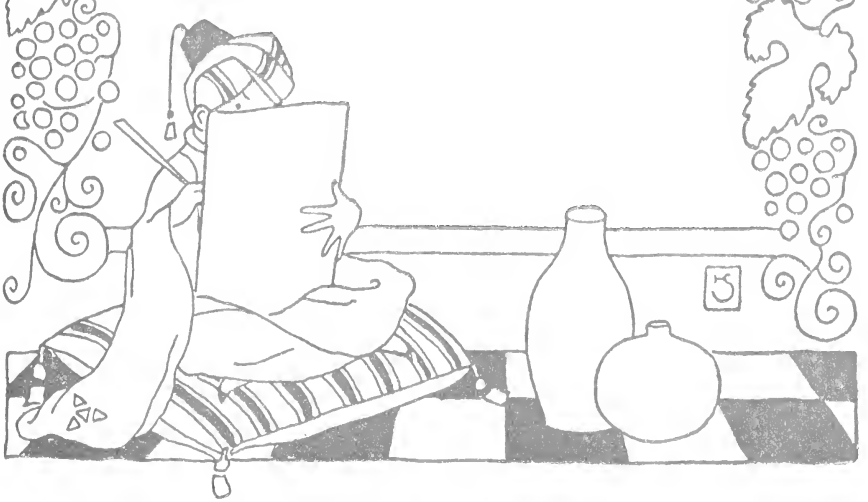
HIS WINTER GARMENTS HUNG—WHERE, NO ONE KNOWS!

HOW blithely through the smiling throng he goes,
His Winter garments hung—where, no one knows!
A Symphony in radiant scarfs and hose,
Wrought t'inspire a maiden's "Ah's!" and "Oh's!"

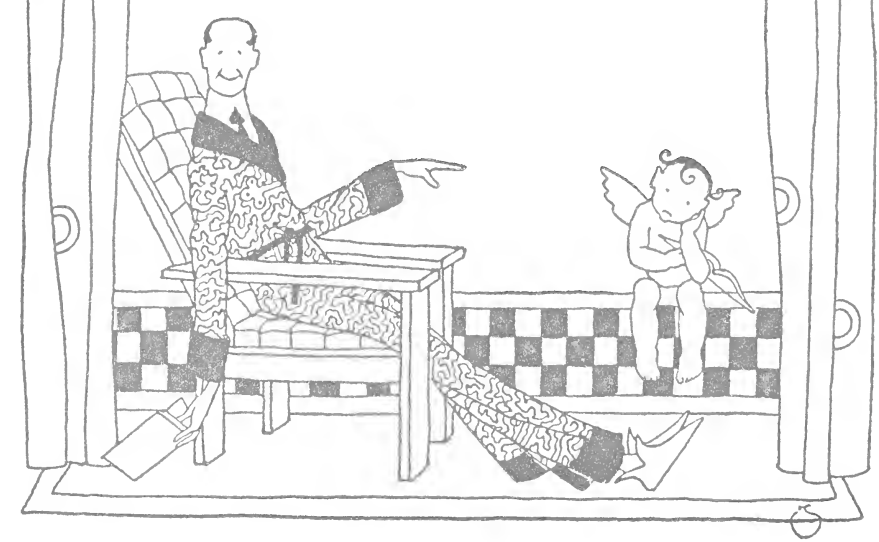
INTO a new Flirtation, why not knowing,
Nor whence, his heart with madness overflowing;
Then out of it—and thence, without a pause,
Into *another*, willy-nilly blowing.



WHAT if the conscience feel, perchance, a sting?
No danger waits him—save the *Wedding Ring*:
A Kiss is not the sin that yesterday
It was—for that was *Lent*, and this is *Spring!*

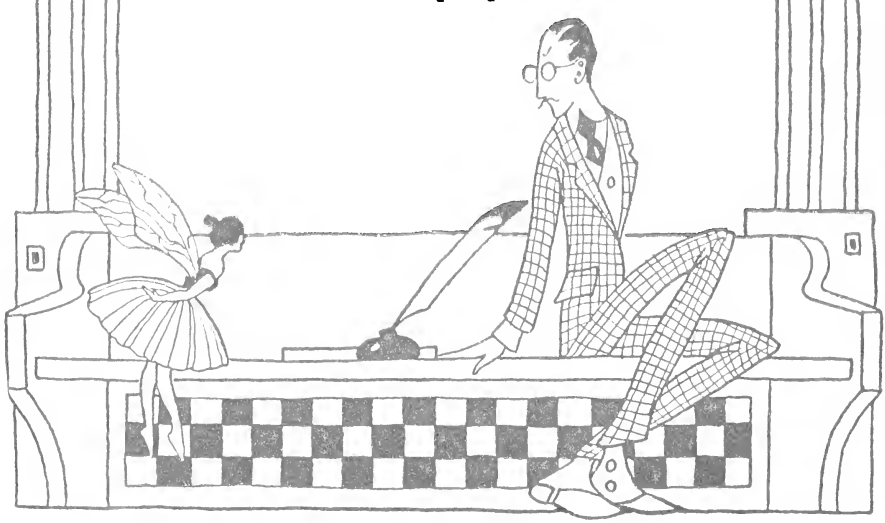


SOME simple ones may sigh for
wealth or fame,
And some, for the sweet Domes-
tic Life, and tame;
But ah! give me a supper, a
cigar,
A charming Woman—and the
old Love-Game!

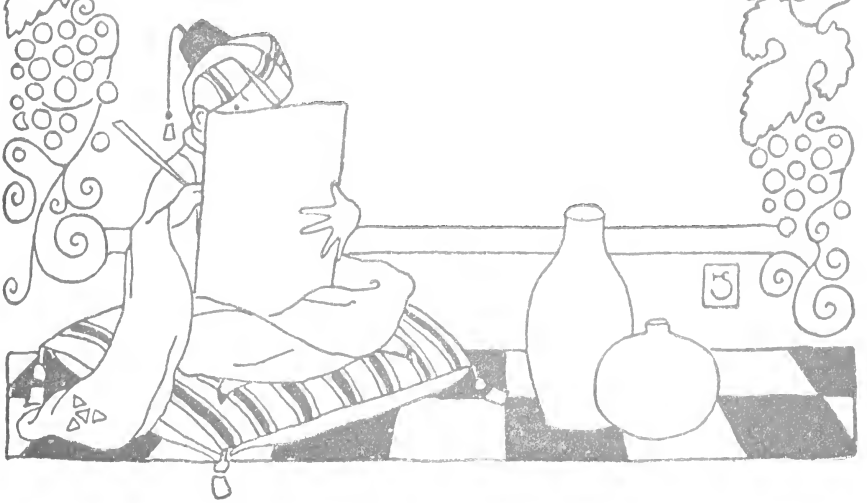


SOME blue points on the half-shell, in a row,
Some iced champagne, a melting bird—and Thou
Beside me flirting, 'neath a picture hat—
Oh, single life were Paradise enow!

A COZY-CORNER tête-ā-tête—
what bliss!
A murmured word, a sigh, a
stolen kiss—
Ah, tell me, does the Prom-
ised Paradise
Hold anything one-half so sweet
as this?



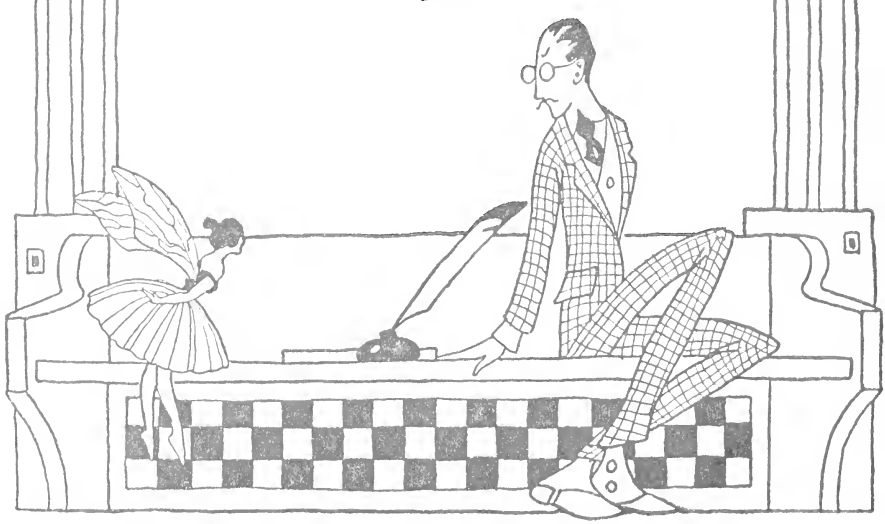
AND yet, since I am made of
common clay,
One charm I'd add to this divine
array;
Lord make me *careful,* and
whate'er betide,
Without proposing, let me slip
away!



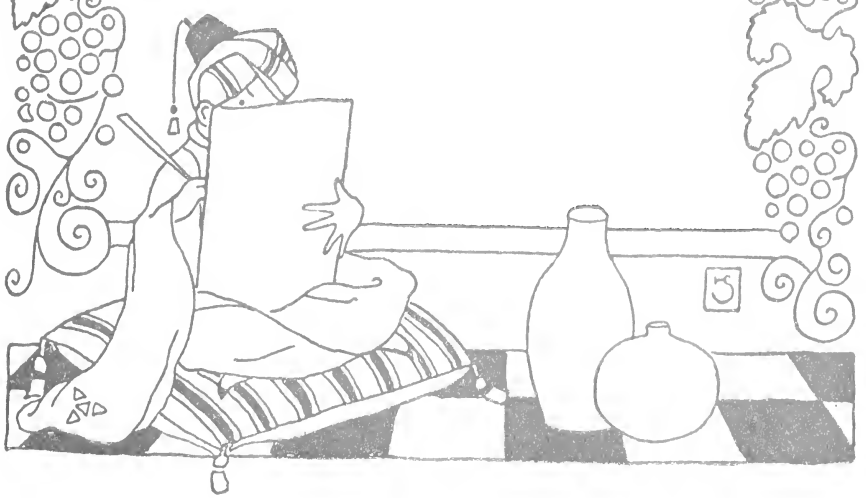
FOR, some I've known, the bravest and the best,
Who laughed at Love, as but an idle jest,
Have, one by one, walked straight into the Net,
Helpless, before the *Cozy Corner* test!

THUS, oft, beside some damsel
fond and fair,
I've sat, thrilled by the perfume
of her hair,
And madly longed to mur-
mur, lip-to-lip,
"Beloved, marry me!"—but did
not dare!

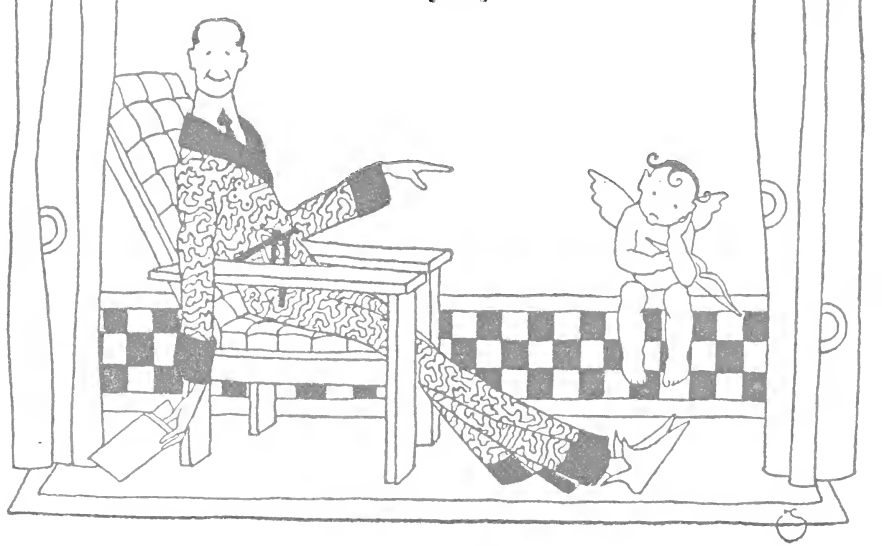
FOR some I've wooed, when I
felt blithe and gay,
Have looked *so different,* when
we met next day,
That I have simply stopped
to say, "So charmed!"
And shuddering, sped hurriedly
away!



LOOK to the Married Men! Alas,
their gains
Are neither here nor there, for all
their pains.
For wedding bells are rung—
and loudly rung
To drown the clanking of the
Marriage Chains!

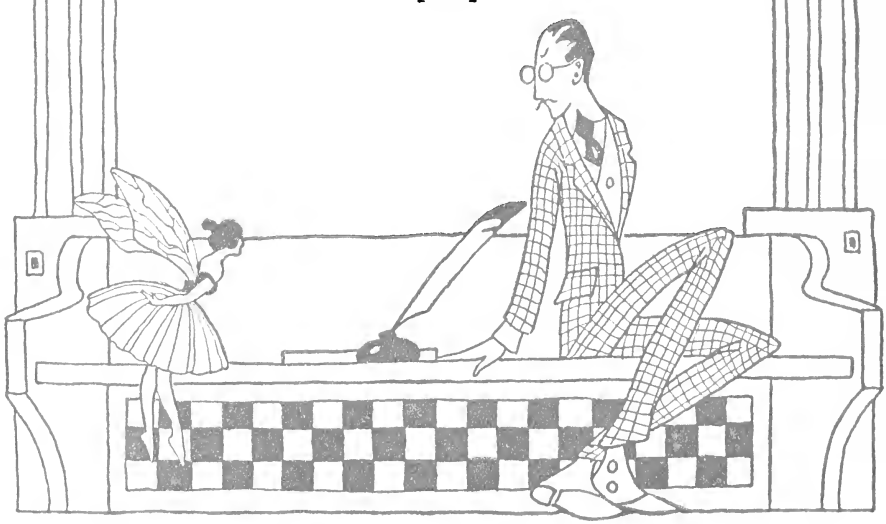


A MOMENT'S halt—a little word
or two—
And you have done what you
can ne'er undo;
Promised to pay a Woman's
bills for life—
Anchored yourself—and there's
an end of you!

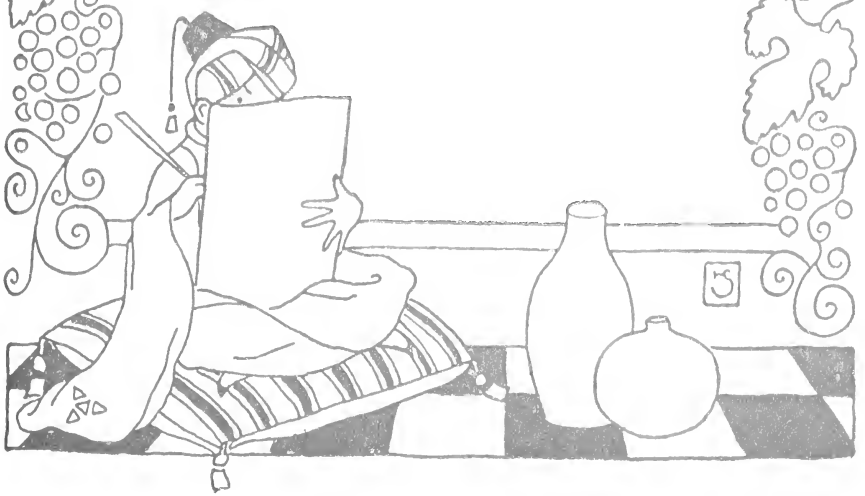


AND we, who now make merry
at the gloom
Of those who thus have gone to
meet their doom—
May we, ourselves, not some
day follow suit,
Ourselves to be the Butt of jests
—for whom?

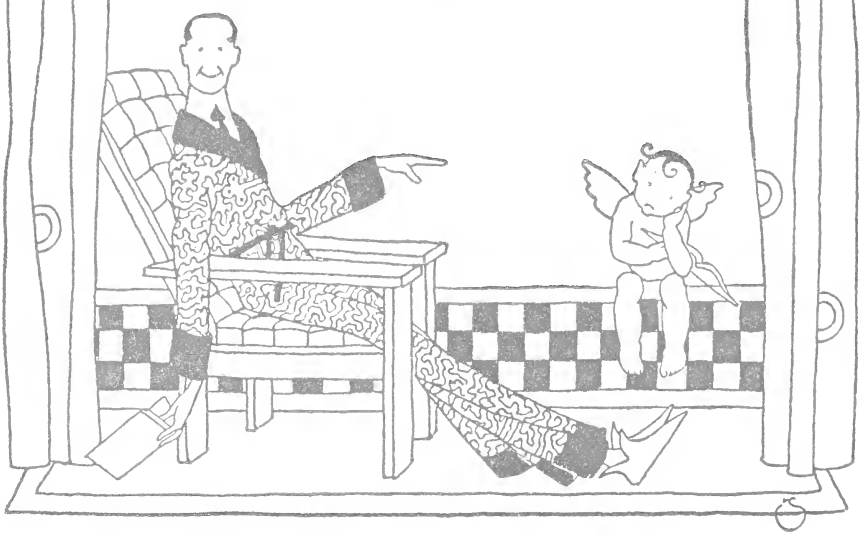
INDEED, 'tis better to have loved and lost—
Taken the Kiss and fled, at any cost,
Than to have loved and married, and for aye,
Thereafter, by a *Woman*, to be bossed.

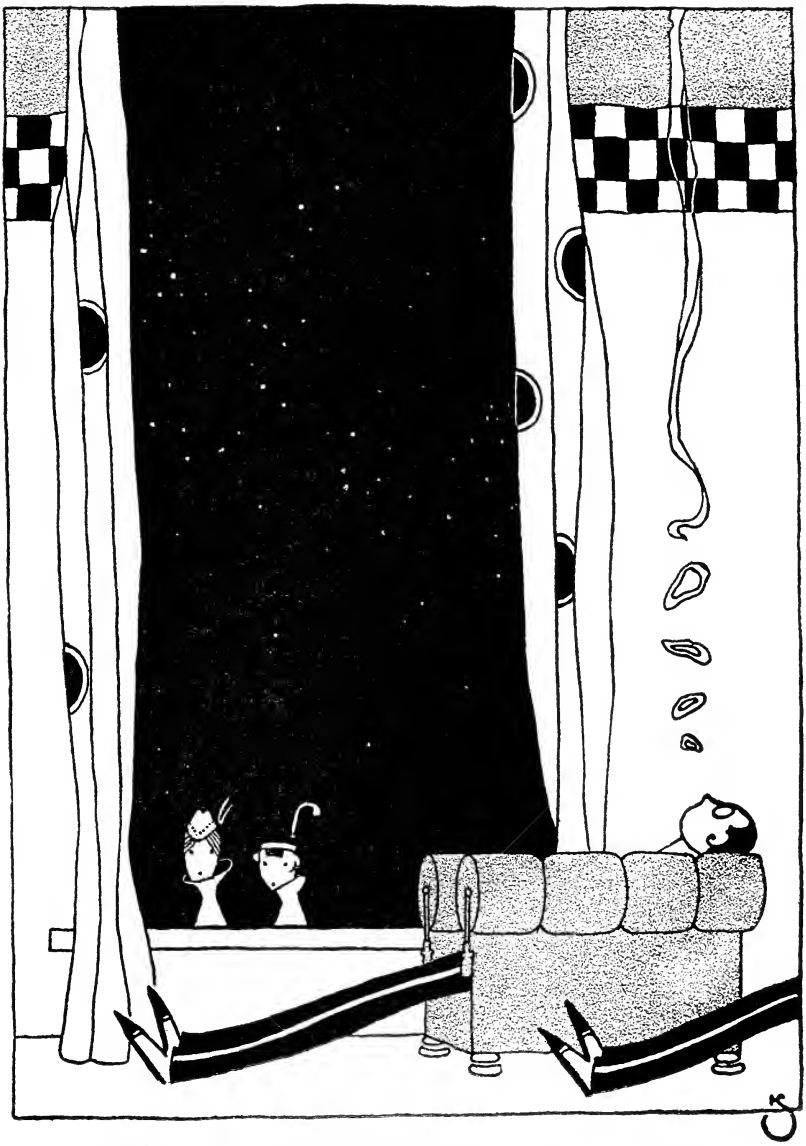


WITH me, along that strip of
Broadway strewn
With lovely maids, each radiant
afternoon,
And think, of all the thou-
sands you behold,
That you can marry one—and
only one!



BUT, if the lip I kiss, the hand I press,
Upon the morrow seem to charm me less,
Ah well, am I not still a *Bachelor*,
And thus, entitled to—another Guess?

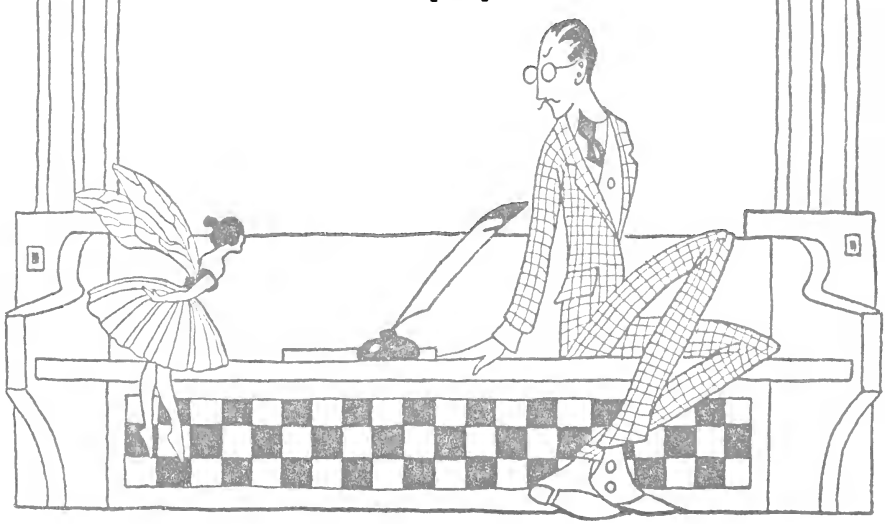




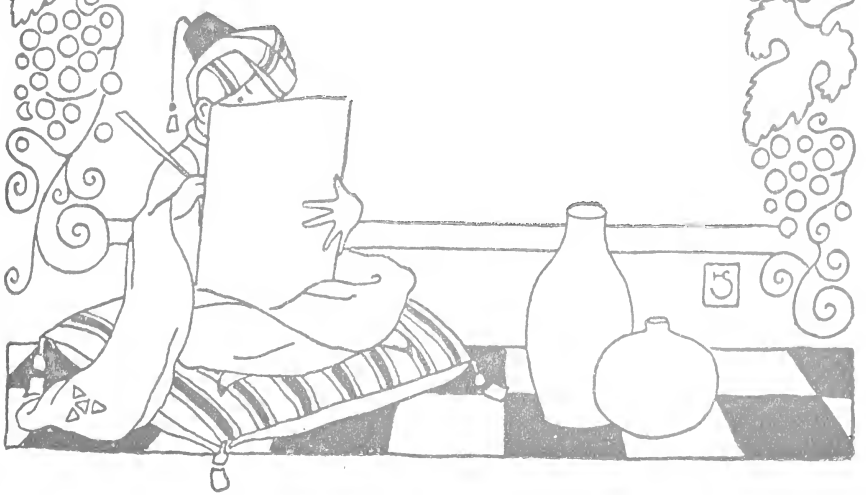
SOME FOR THE COMFORTS OF A CLUB MAY SIGH.

SOME for the comforts of a club
may sigh,
And some for a hermit's lonely
life. Not I!
Give me a cozy hearthside,
and a Girl
Always "at home" when *I* chance
by!

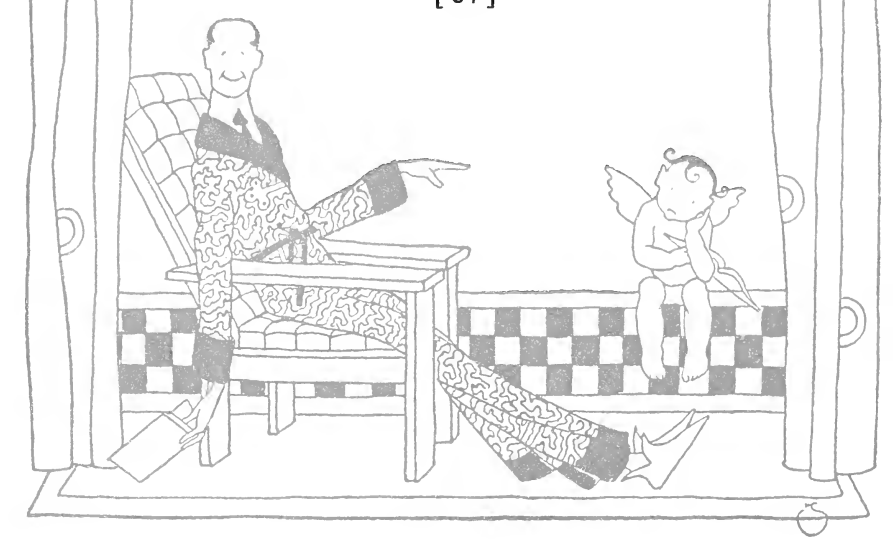
HER cushioned chair a spot
where I may curl
My weary form, and rest, beyond
the whirl
Of madd'ning cares; to rise
at half-past ten,
And call next night—upon *an-*
other girl!



WHY, if a man can thus, at ease, abide
Each evening by a different damsel's side,
Were't not a shame—were't not a shame, for him
To any *one*, forever to be tied?



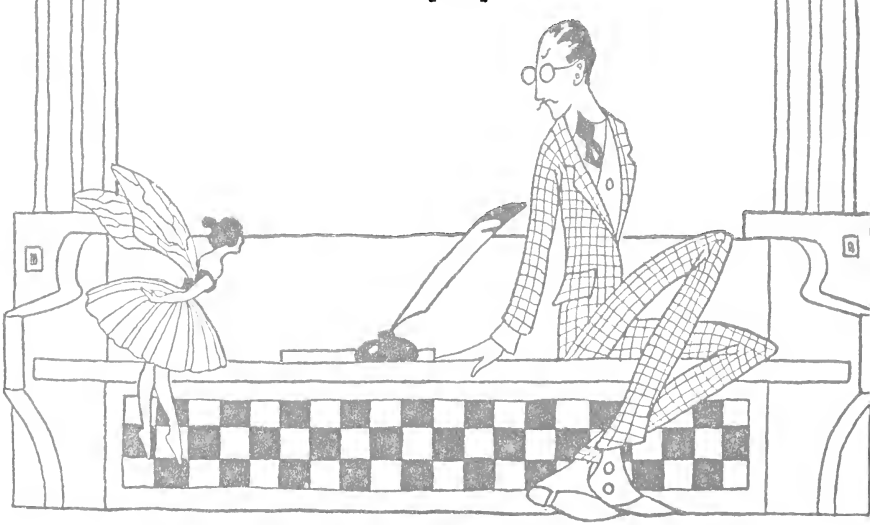
AND so, the girls I've set my heart upon,
I've flattered, wooed a little—and anon,
Just as they thought to slip the fatal Noose
About my neck, behold—the Bird had flown!

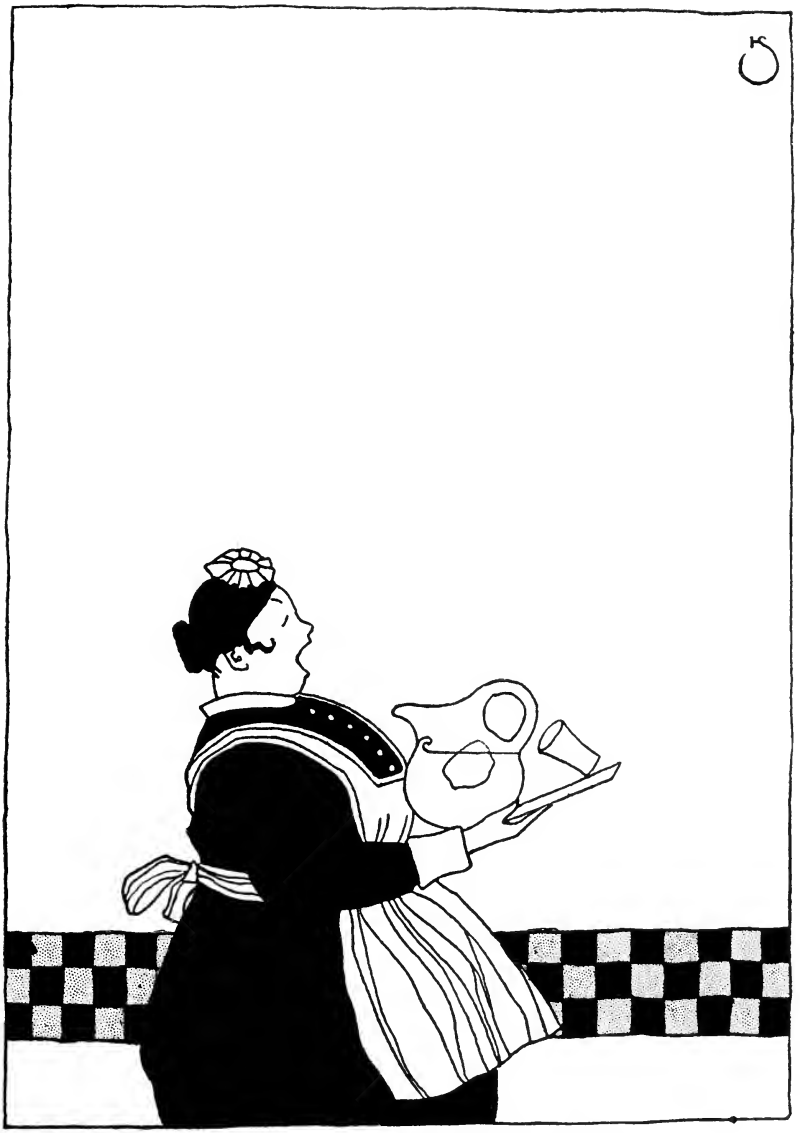


FOR this the argument that I submit—
Refute it, if you can, with all your wit!
That Luck in Love, for such as you and I,
Consists in safely keeping *out* of it!

. . . . . .

THIS morn, I've quaffed at least
a quart or more
Of water—yet am thirsty as be-
fore;
And that dark taste still lin-
gers in the mouth
With which, last night, I refor-
mation swore.

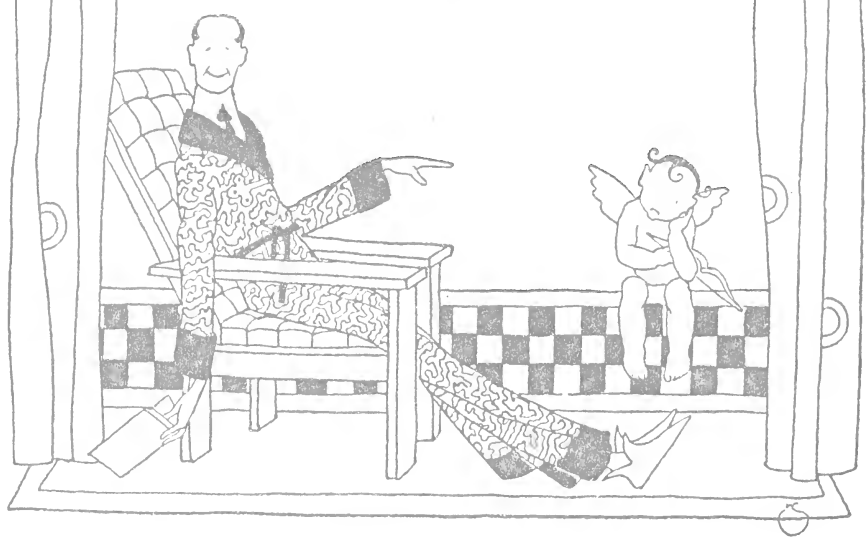




SOME ANGEL, WITH A SAVING DRINK.

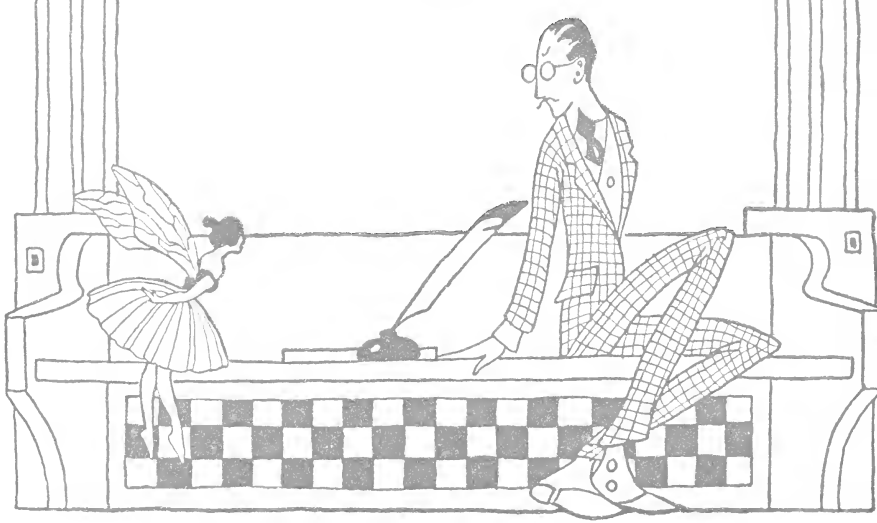
YET, when some Angel, with a saving drink
Of iced Nepenthe comes, I shall not shrink;
But, having drunk of it, shall feel again
As good and noble as before, I think.

EACH morn some fresh repentance brings, you say?
Yes—but where leaves the vows of Yesterday?
For I shall make and break them all, again,
When Time hath taken *this* Headache away.

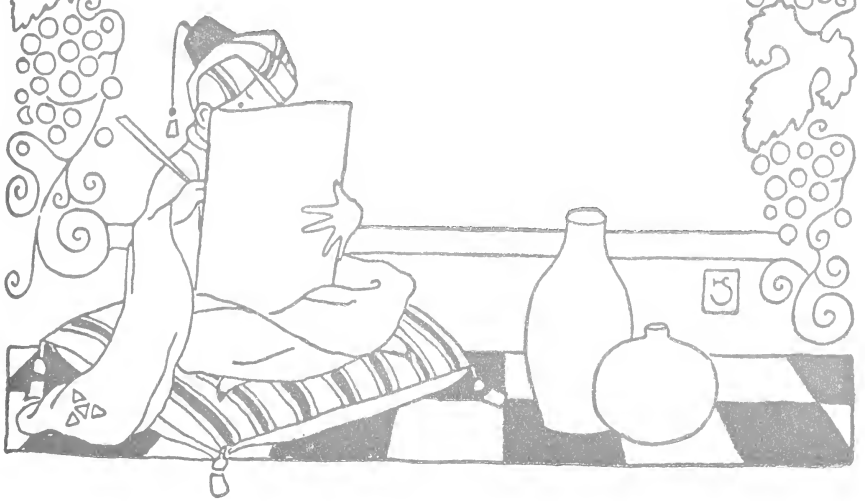


WHAT if my conscience seem an
idle joke—
My good resolves all disappear
in smoke?
This thought remains—and
is it not enough?—
I do not wear the Matrimonial
Yoke!

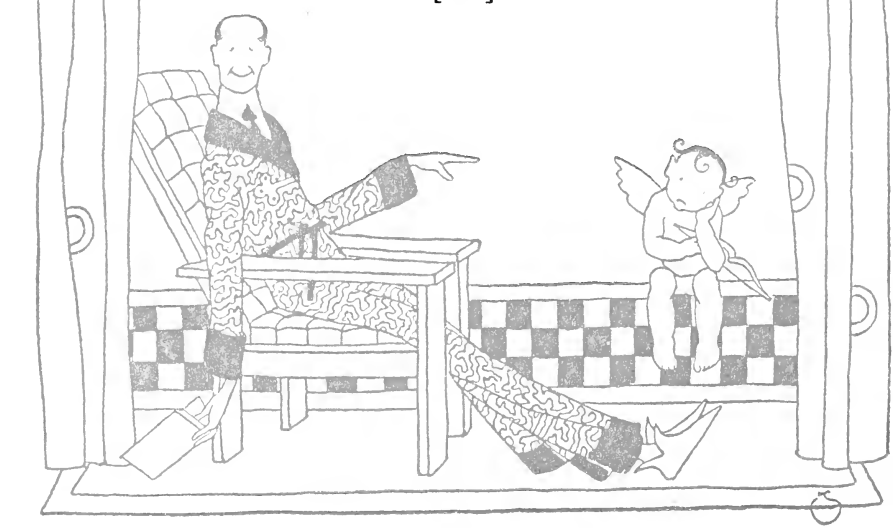
NAY! There is no one waiting
at the door,
Whene'er I wander in at half-
past four,
No one to question, no one to
accuse,
No one, my shocking frailty to
deplore!



NO one to greet me with her
tear-stained eyes,
No one to doubt my quaint, fan-
tastic lies,
No one my foolish looks to
criticize—
Ah, but the knots, the KNOTS
in marriage-ties!

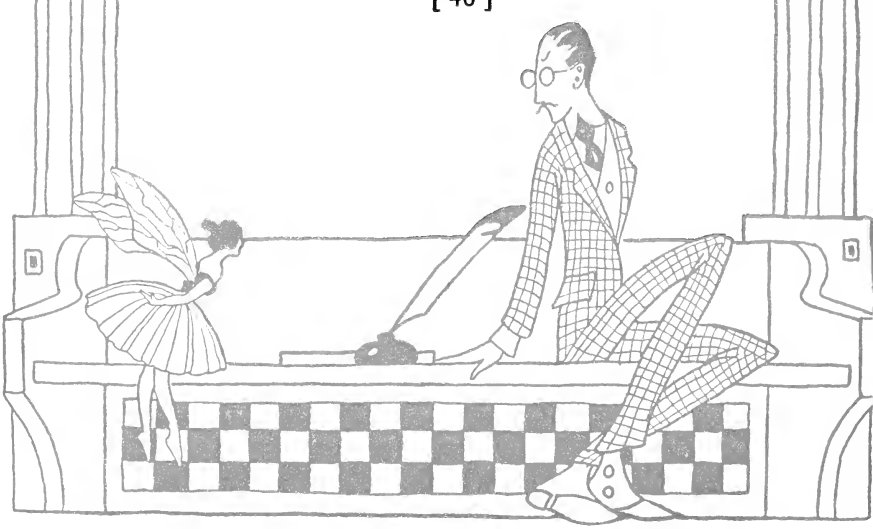


OH Friend, could you and I,
somehow, conspire,
To grasp the Matrimonial
Scheme entire,
Would we not shatter it to
bits—and then,
Make of its bonds a rousing Fu-
neral Pyre?

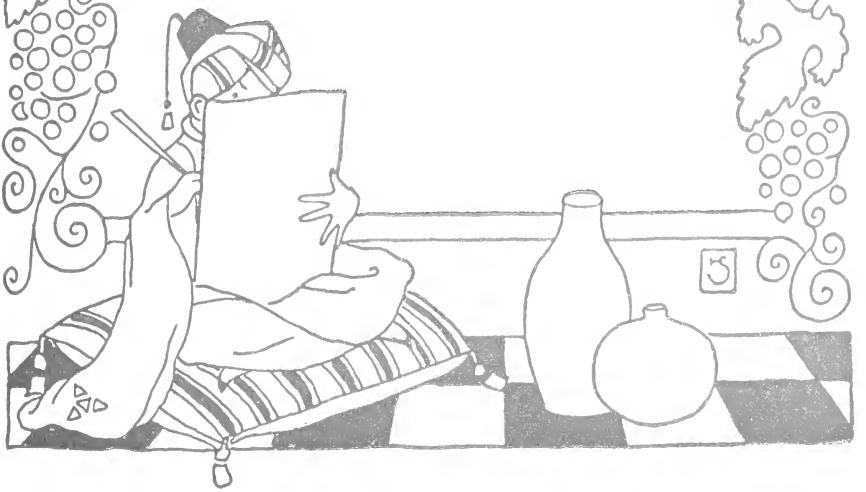


MYSELF, when young, did eagerly frequent
The weddings of my friends on Bondage bent;
But evermore thanked Fate, when I escaped
Scot-free, by that same door wherein I went.

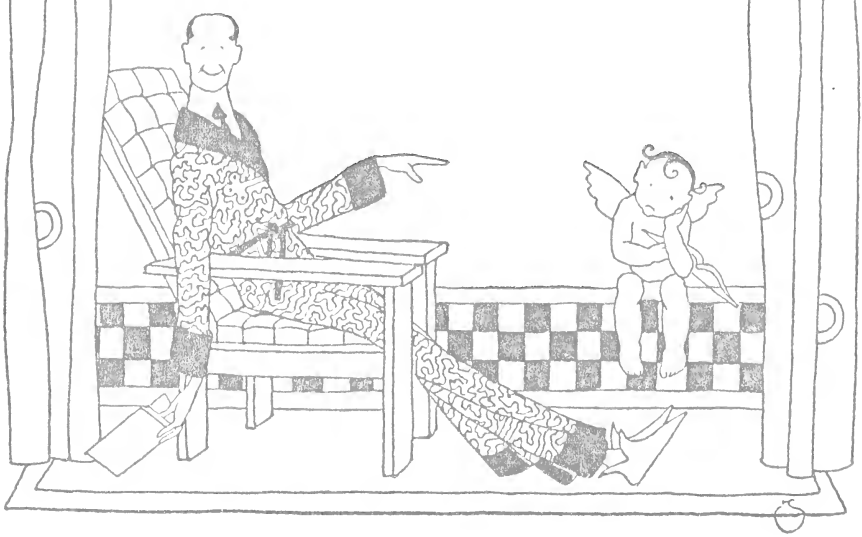
INTO the fatal compact, why
not knowing,
I've seen them go, nor dream
where they were going;
Then out again, with shouts
of "Westward, ho!"
The bitter seeds of *Alimony* sow-
ing!

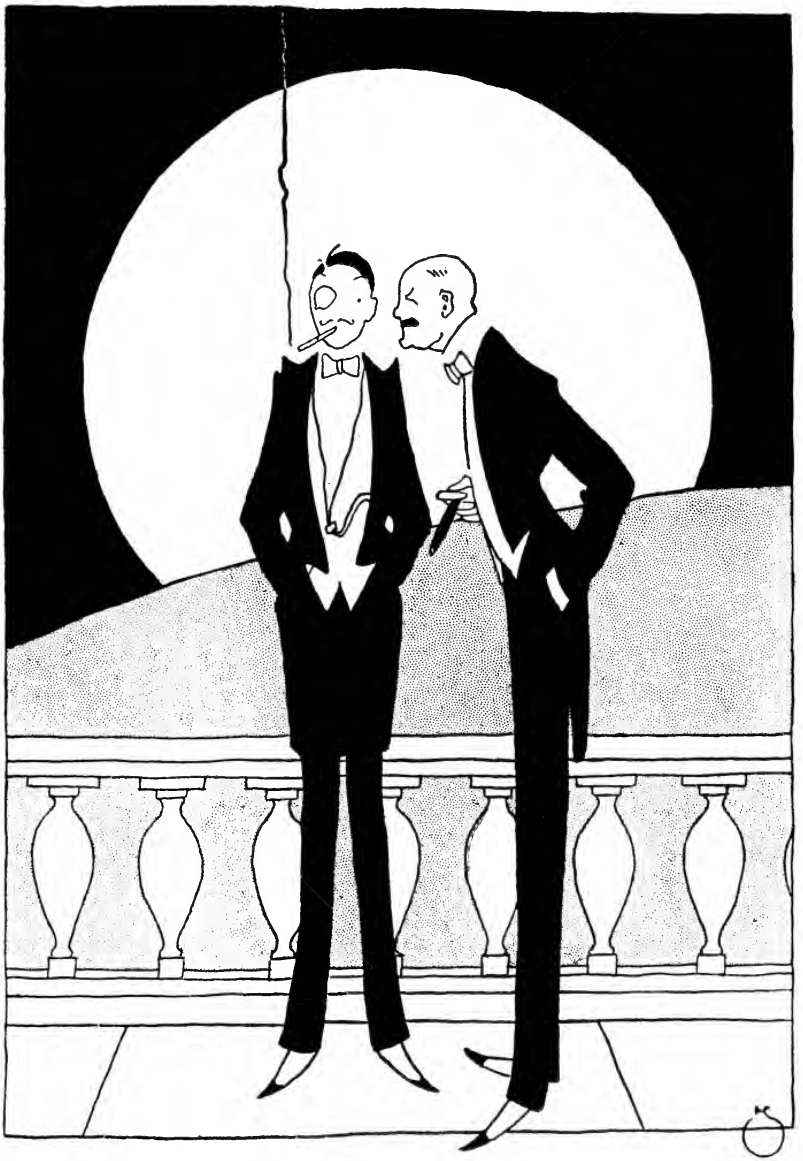


AH well, they say that, sometimes, side by side,
A cat and dog may peacefully abide.
Perhaps—perhaps. But that is only when
That cat and dog are not *together* tied!



OFT, to some patient married
man I turn,
The secret of his dumb content
to learn,
But lip-to-ear, he mutters,
"Fool, beware!"
This is the path, whence there is
no return!"



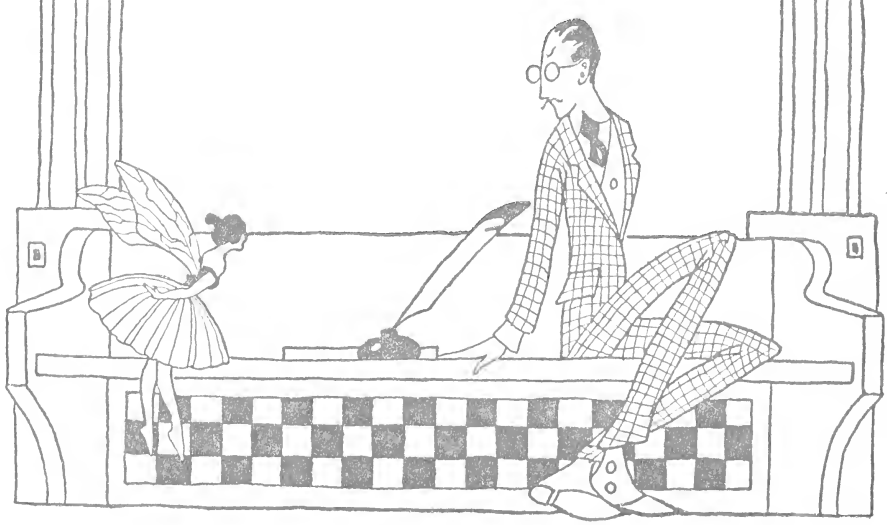


BUT, LIP-TO-EAR, HE MUTTERS, "FOOL, BEWARE!"

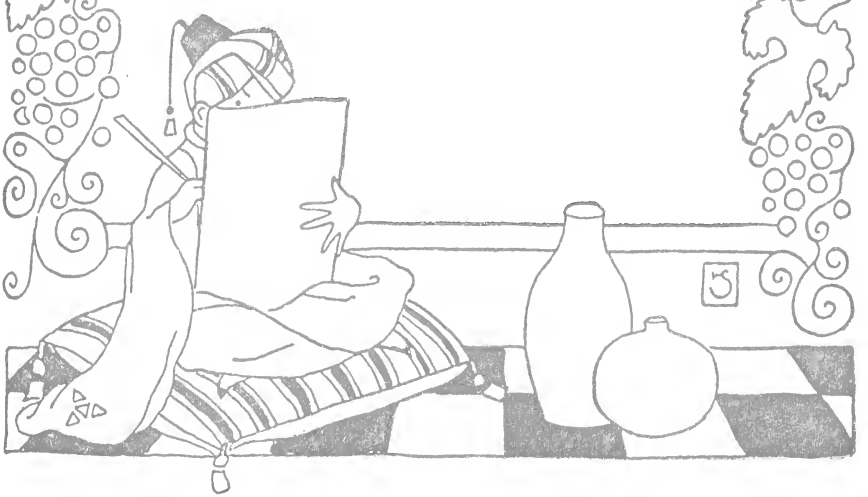
OH, threats of Hell, and hopes of
Paradise!
One thing is certain—when a
Husband dies,
No wife shall greet him
there with "Where's" or
"Why's"
Nor mock with laughter his
most subtle lies!

NO matter whether up or down
he goes,
He neither cares nor questions, I
suppose;
Since Death can hold no bit-
terness for him,
Because—because—Oh well, he
knows, HE KNOWS!

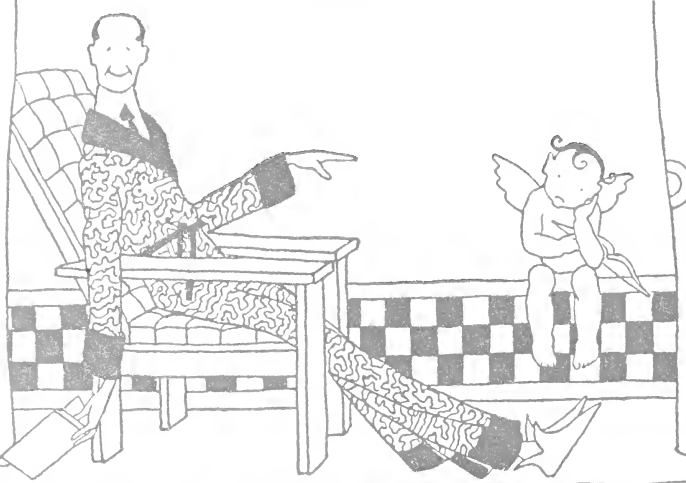
. . . . . .



WOULD you the spangle of existence spend
In Matrimony? Slow about, my Friend!
A maiden's hair is more oft false than true,
And on the chemist may her blush depend.

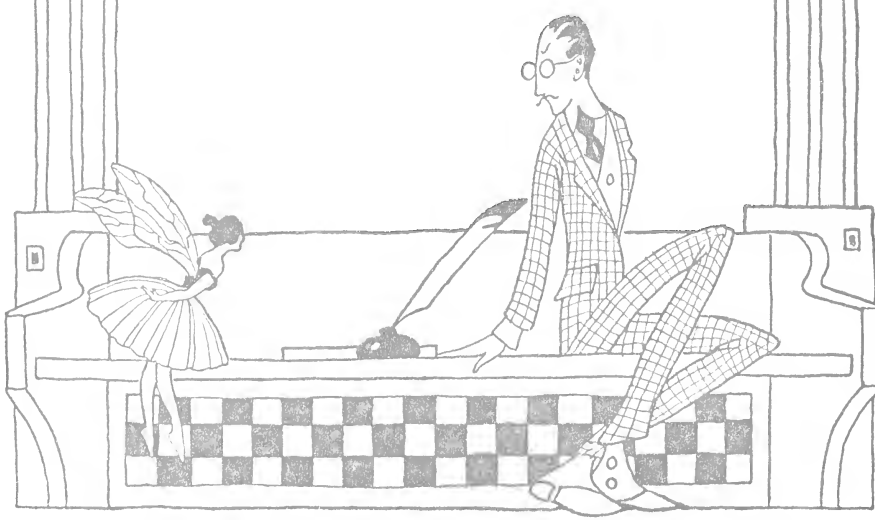


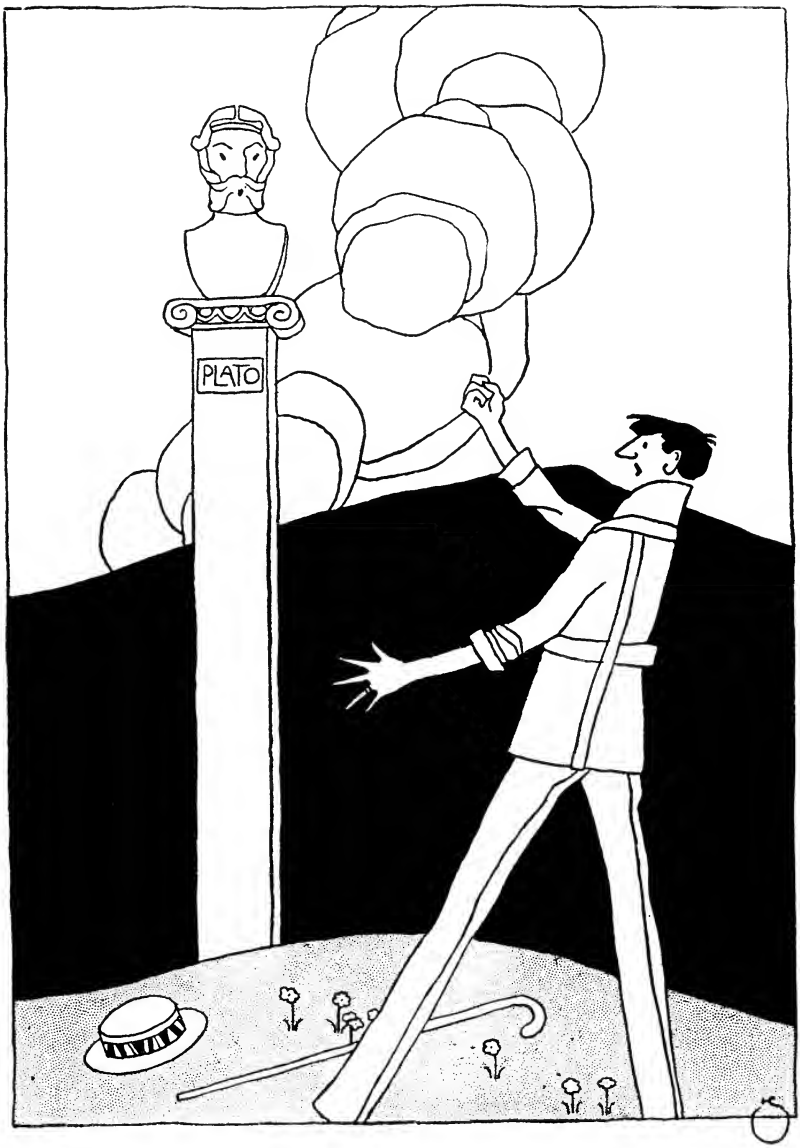
A MAIDEN'S hair is more oft
false than true!
Aye, and her Modiste is, per-
chance, the clue,
Could you but know it, to
her sylph-like grace,
And, peradventure, to her *Figure*,
too.



WHY, for this NOTHING, then, should you provoke
The gods, or lightly don the galling yoke
Of unpermitted pleasure, under pain
Of Alimony-until-Death, if broke?

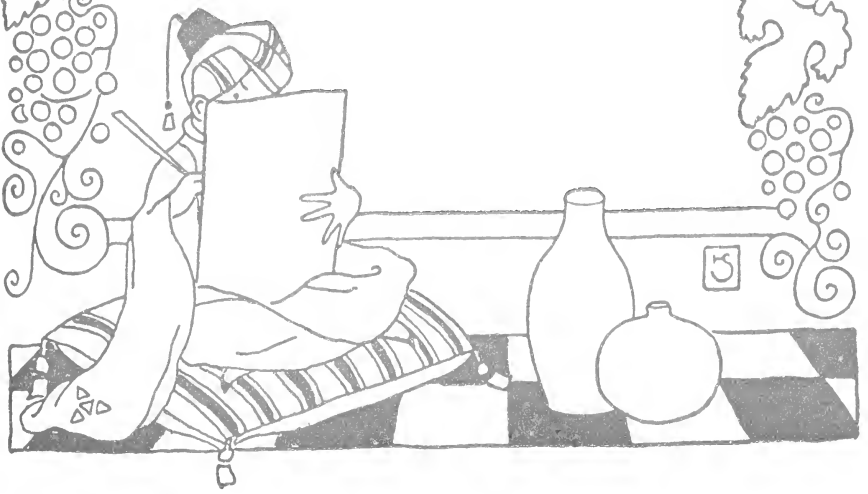
WHY, when to-day your bills are
promptly paid,
Assume the whims of some ca-
pricious maid,
Incur the debts you never did
contract,
And yet must settle? Oh, the
sorry trade!



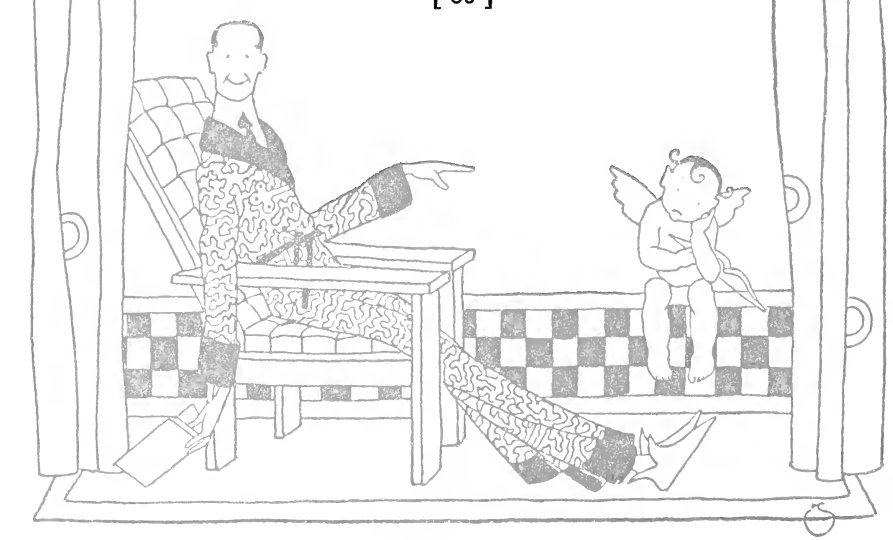


I SWORE—BUT WAS I SOBER WHEN I SWORE?

TO "settle down and marry," oft of yore,
I swore—but was I sober when I swore?
And then there came another girl—and I
Turned gaily to the old Love-Game, once more.



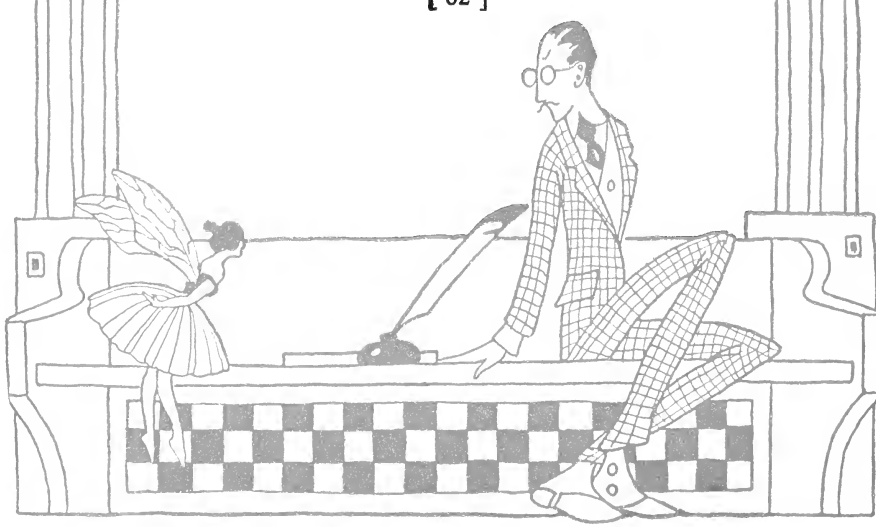
AND, much as I repented things
like this,
And fondly dreamed of sweet
Domestic Bliss,
I sometimes wonder what a
wife can give,
One half so thrilling as a stolen
kiss!

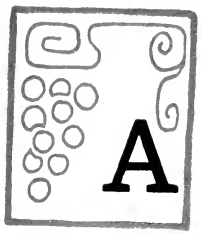


YET, if the hair should vanish
from my brow,
My girth, in time, to great dimen-
sions grow—
If youth's sweet-scented
"Buds" should pass me by,
Accounting me an antiquated
beau—

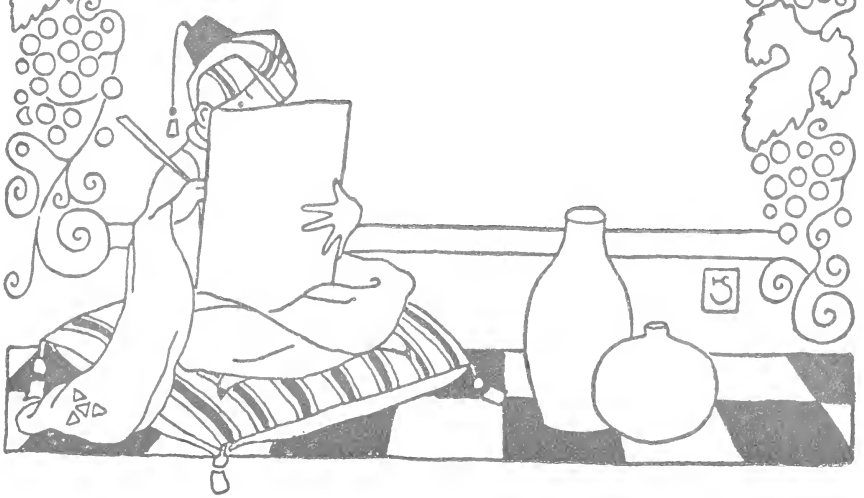
WHY then, some winged angel, ere too late—
Some maiden verging onto twenty-eight—
Will gladly take what's left of me, I trow,
And, leading me to wedlock, thank her Fate!

. . . . . .

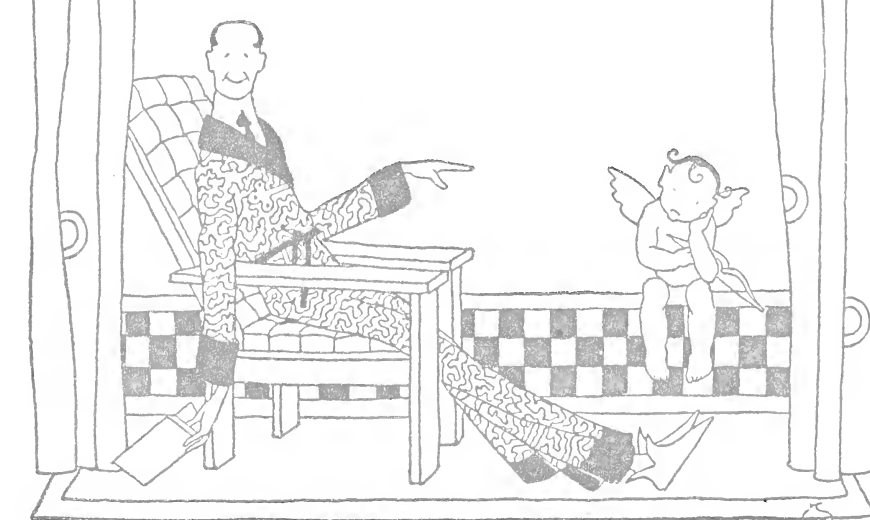




ALAS, for those who may to-day
prepare
The wedding trousseau for the
morrow's wear,
A voice of warning cried,
"There's many a slip
Betwixt the Altar and the Soli-
taire!"



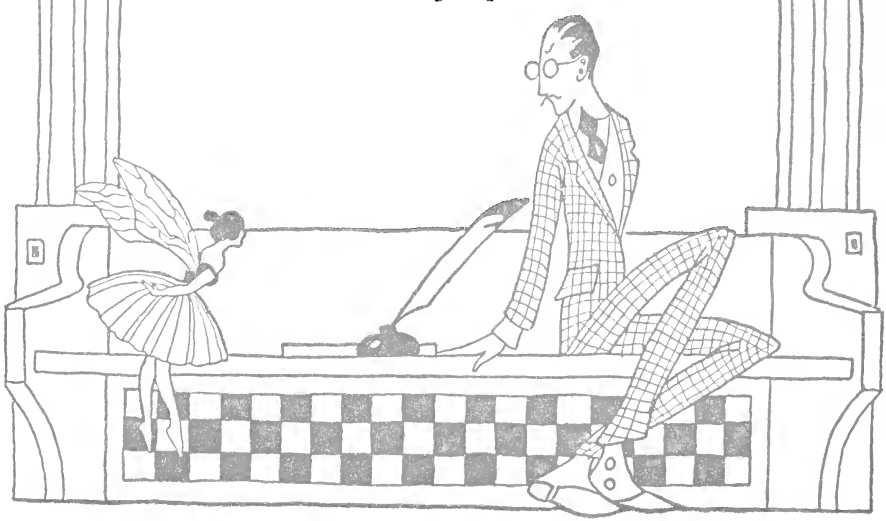
INTO this pact, man glides like
water flowing,
But *out* of it is not such easy
going;
For they, who once were sim-
ple, guileless things,
In Breach-of-Promise lore are
now more knowing.



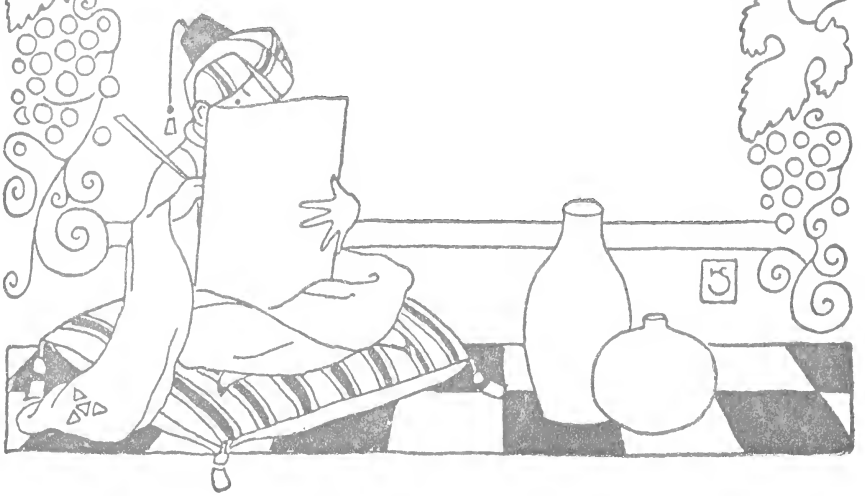
WHAT! WOULD YOU CAST A LOVING WOMAN HENCE?

WHAT! Would you cast a loveing Woman hence?
Thou, Fickle One, prepare for penitence!
Full many a golden ducat shall you pay
To drown the memory of such insolence.

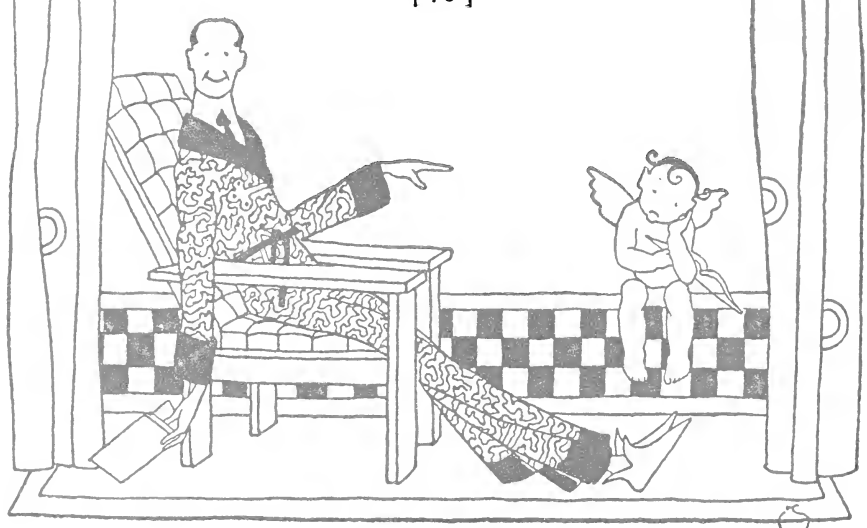
AND every note, that, in your cups, you write,
In cold black Type, perchance shall see the light;
While all the World, across its coffee urn,
Shall titter gaily at the sorry sight.



AH yes! For all the papers,
which discussed
Your wedding plans, shall turn
your cake to crust,
Publish your letters and your
photographs,
And trail your Egotism in the
dust!

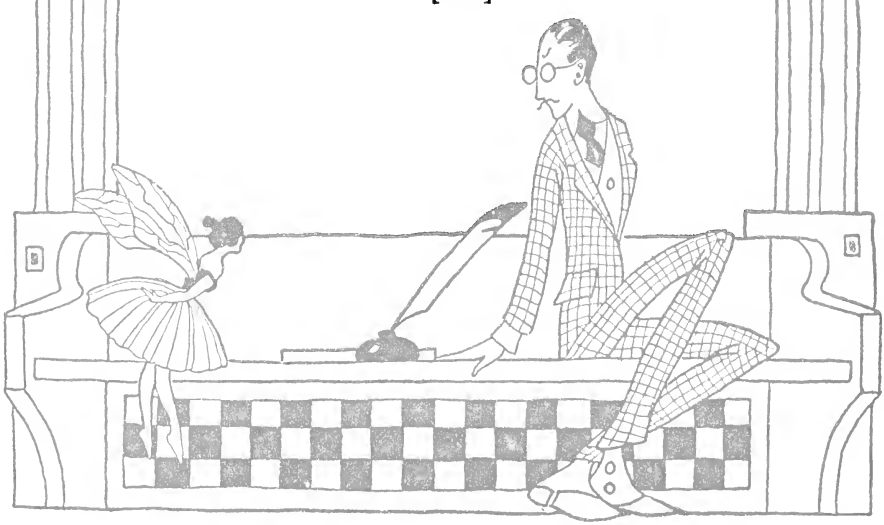


THE Opera Queens, that men
have wooed and won,
Have loved them for a while,
and then—anon,
Like snow upon Broadway,
with lightsome "touch,"
Annexed their millions, and alas,
have flown!

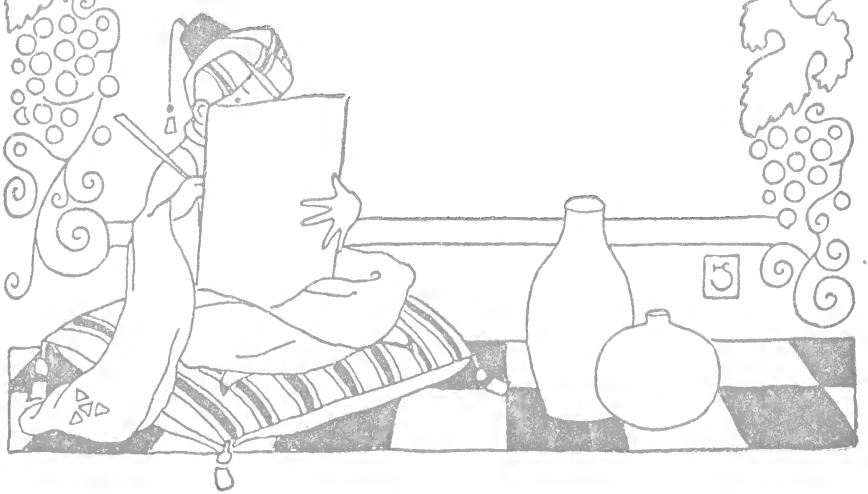


OH look you, in the long and varied list
Of Millionaires thus rifled and dismissed,
How, rich man, after rich man, bode his hour,
Then went his way, to swell the golden grist.

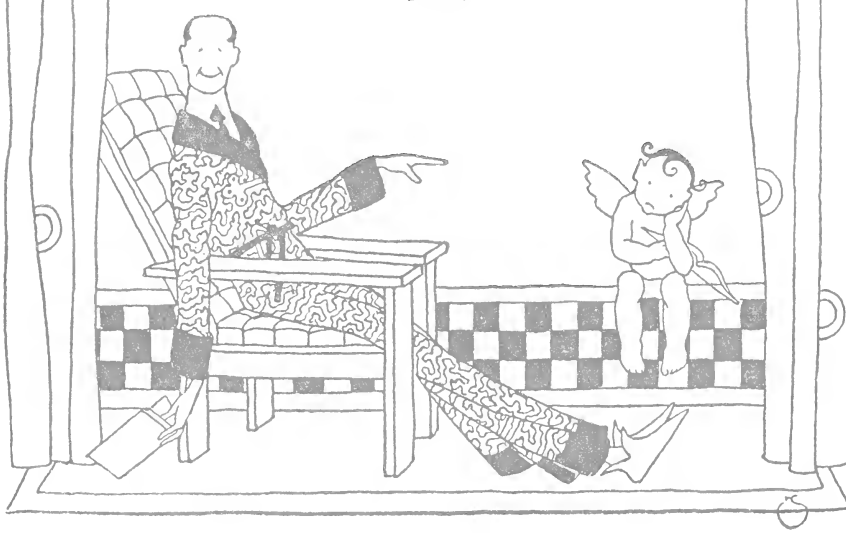
WHAT Diva's rubies ever glow
so red
As when some Gilded Chappie
hath been bled?
And every diamond the Show
Girl wears,
Dropped in her lap, when some
Fool lost his head.



AND those who hung around
the green-room door,
And those who backed the Show
and paid the score,
Alike, to no such "Angels"
have been turned,
As, once repentant, men feel sor-
ry for.



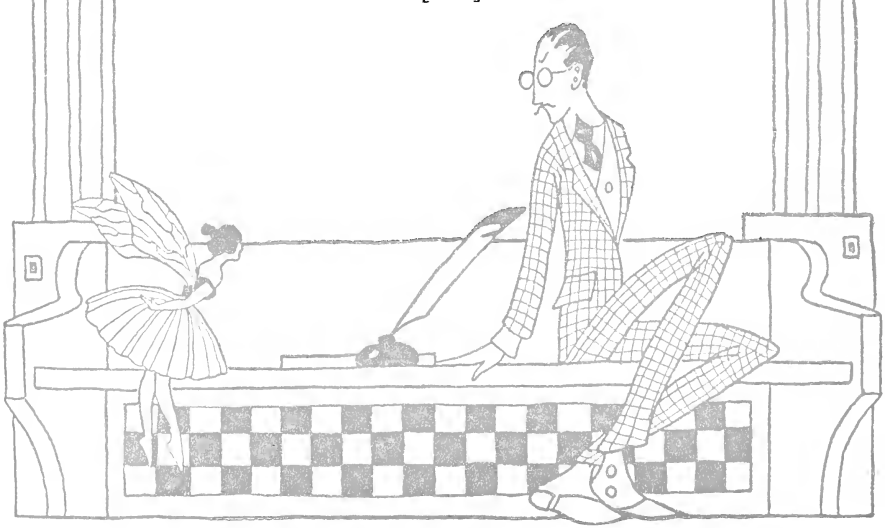
OH, my Good Fellow, keep the cash, that clears
To-day of unpaid debts and future fears.
To-morrow! Why, to-morrow, you may be,
Yourself, with Yesterday's cast-off millionaires.



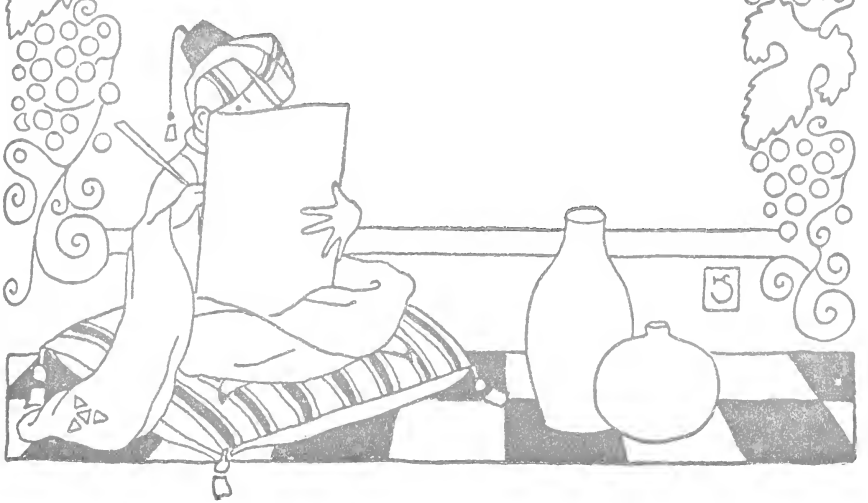
THEN, make the most of what
you still may spend,
Ere you, too, into bankruptcy
descend,
Bill upon bill, and under bill,
to lie,
Sans Cash, sans Love, sans Lady
—What an end!

. . . . . .

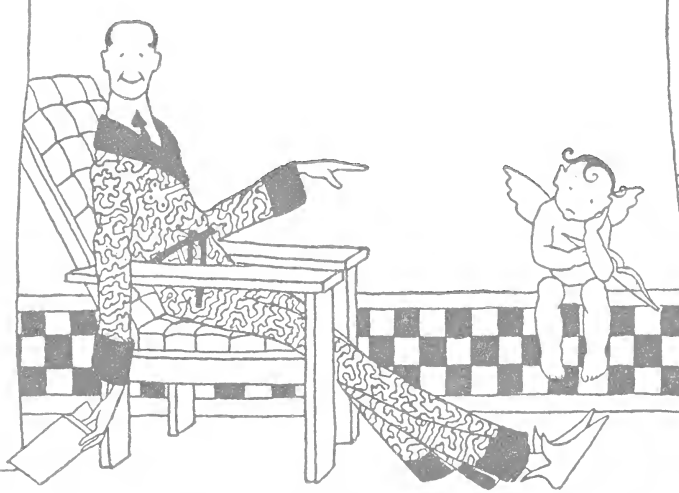
WASTE not your evenings in the vain pursuit
Of this or that girl. Bitter-sweet the fruit!
Better be jocund with them, one and all,
And loving *many*, thus your love dilute.



SOME, with vivacity have sought
to charm
Away my fears, and still my
soul's alarm;
To win me subtly, with a
smile or sigh,
Or sweet appealing touch upon
the arm.

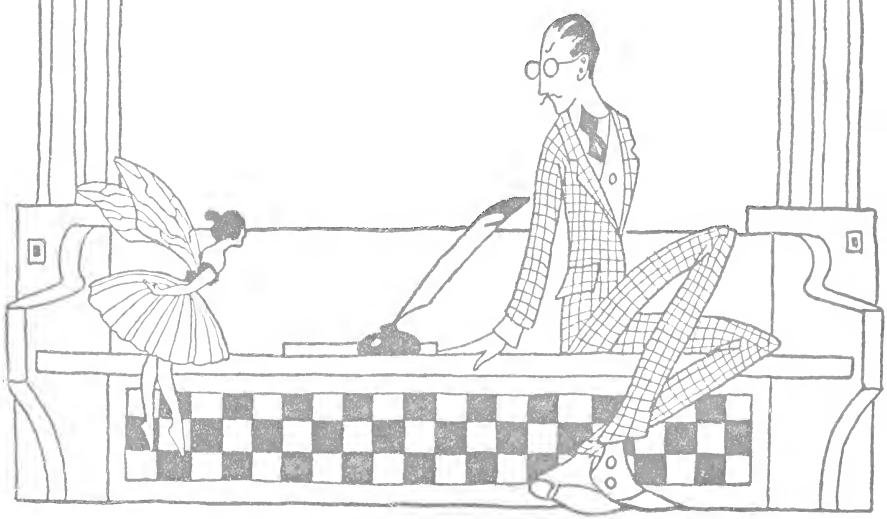


OTHERS have tempted me with
festive cheer,
And Chafing-dish Concoctions,
quaint and queer;
With dear, domestic airs have
plied their arts—
Yet, all their wiles were neither
there nor here!



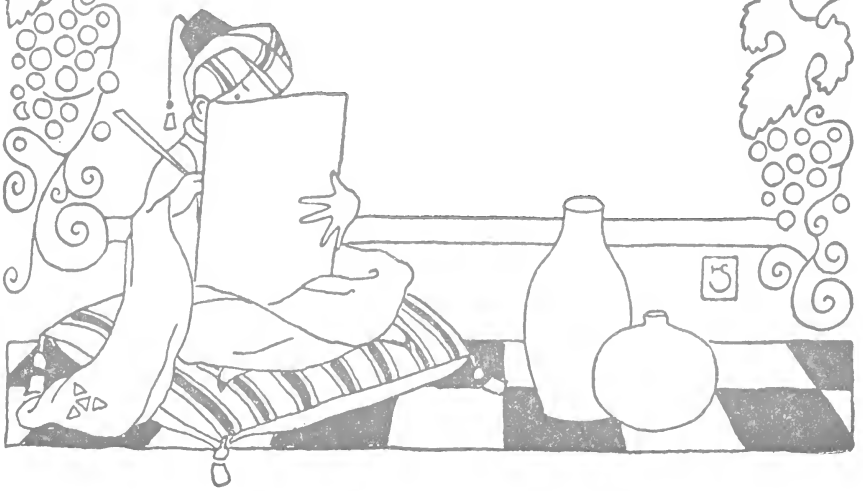
BUT when *Platonic Friendship*
they have tried,
Then, to the gods for Mercy, have
I cried!
For, in the Husband-hunt, all
other snares
Sink into Nothingness, *this* game
beside!

THERE is the Trap, from which
you may not flee;
There is the Net, through which
no man may see.
Some jest at "love," some talk
of "chums," and then,
Into the Consommé, for thee and
me!



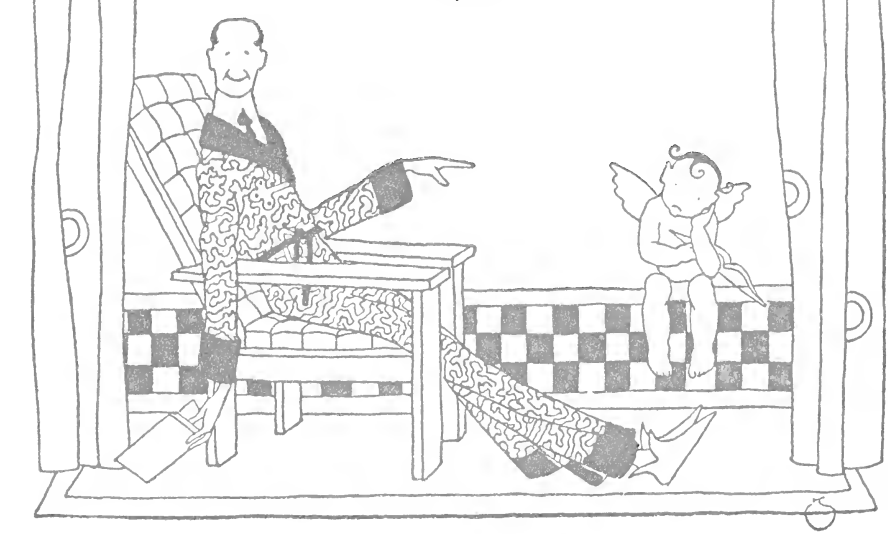
THERE IS THE TRAP, FROM WHICH YOU MAY NOT FLEE.

WHETHER to Church, or to the
Magistrate,
You follow, after that, 'tis all too
late!
For, from your Pipe-dream,
you, at last, shall wake,
A MARRIED MAN, to rail in
vain at Fate!



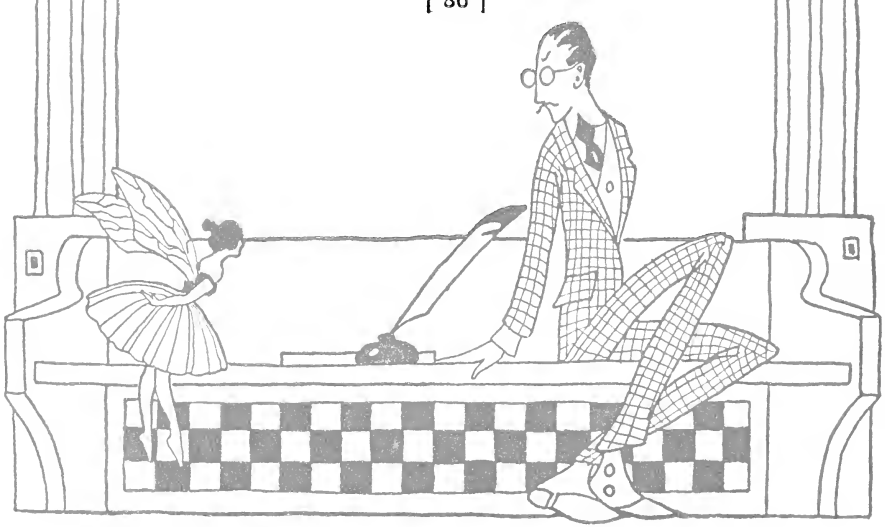
LOVE, but the Vision of a dear
desire!
Marriage, the Ashes, whence has
fled the fire!
Cast into chains which you,
yourself, have forged!
Caught, like a sheep upon a stray
barbed wire!

. . . . . .

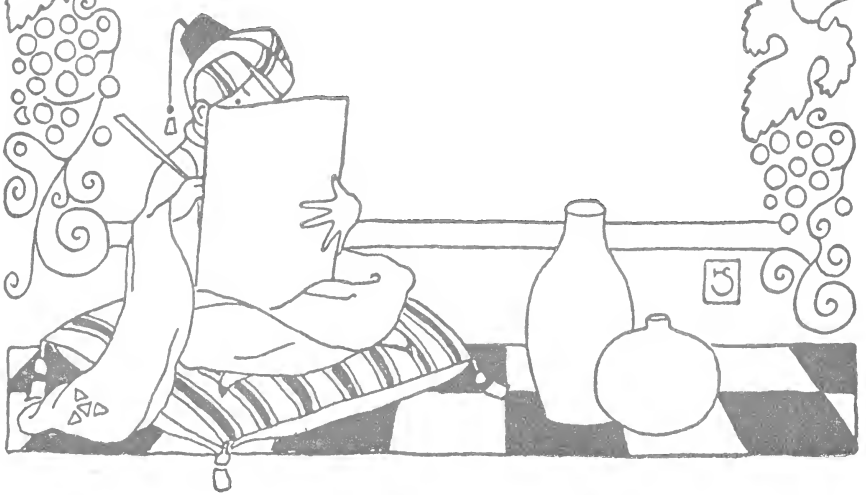


O H Thou, who first the Apple
Tree didst shake,
And e'en in Eden flirted with
the Snake,
Still, as in that first moment
'neath the Bough,
Dost thou, to-day, of Man a
puppet make!

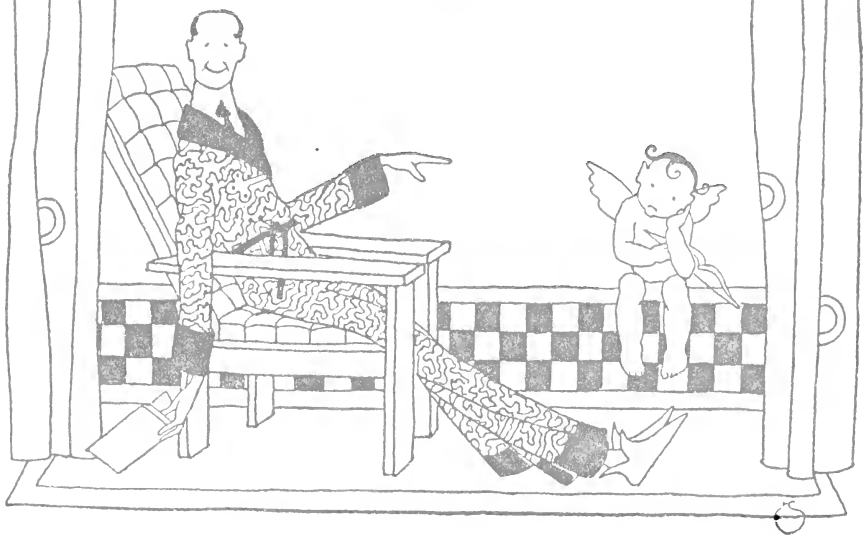
BUT this I know—whether the
one True Mate,
Or just some Fluffy Thing with
hook and bait,
Eve-like, tempt *me*—one flash
of Common Sense,
And all her sorcery shall be too
late!



THEN, let her never look for me, again;
For, once escaped, how many moons shall wane,
And wax and wane full oft, while still she looks
Down that same street—but ah, for ME, in vain!

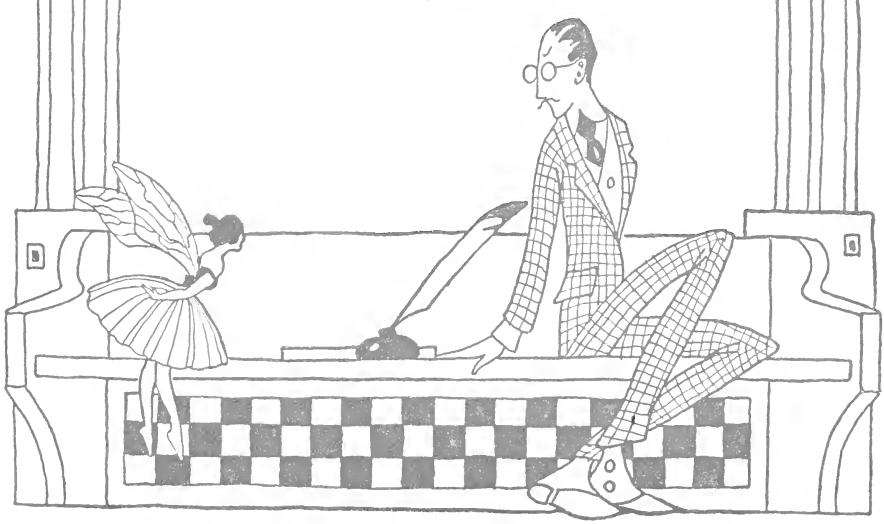


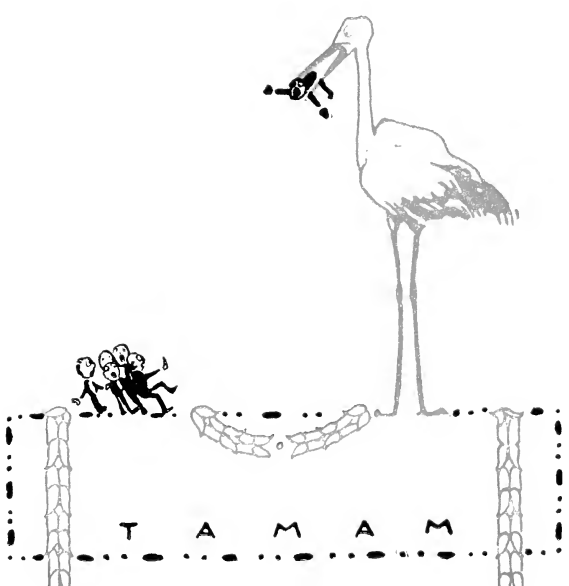
YET, much as I have played the
Infidel,
If, as the fated Pitcher to the
Well,
Too oft to Love's empyrean
Font I stray,
To fall, at last, beneath some
Siren's spell,



THEN, in your mercy, Friend, forbear to smile,
And with the grape my last few hours beguile,
Or, let me in some Caravanserie,
My Cynic's soul to *shackles* reconcile.

AND when, with me, some fair, triumphant lass,
Up to the rose-decked Altar-Rail shall pass,
And, in her joyous errand, reach the spot,
Where we're made *One*—oh, drain a silent glass!
Tamam.

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